

# A Letter to Parents on Art



## What We Do and Why

Art is an important part of our curriculum. Every day, children find a variety of art materials available on our shelves. Drawing, painting, cutting, pasting, and playing with playdough are not only enjoyable but also provide important opportunities for learning. Children express original ideas and feelings, improve their coordination, develop small muscle skills, learn to recognize colors and textures, and develop creativity and pride in their accomplishments by exploring and using art materials.

When children are engaged in art activities, we talk with them about what they are doing and ask questions that encourage them to think about their ideas and express feelings. For example, we might say:

- “I can see you like the new colors we put on the easels today.”
- “You made a lot of pictures. Which one do you want to hang up?”
- “You worked a long time with the clay today. What did you like doing best?”

As you can tell, we like to focus on what children are doing – not on what their finished artwork looks like. We say such things as these:

- “Tell me about your picture” instead of “What did you make?”
- “It looks like the playdough is sticking to your fingers. What could we do to make it less sticky?” instead of “You’re not having much success with the playdough.”

## What You Can Do At Home

Art is a very easy way to bring your child’s school life into your home. Here are some things you might wish to try:

- Designate a drawer in the kitchen or living room as an art drawer, or use a bookshelf or sturdy cardboard box. In this space include crayons, marking pens, paper, a pair of scissors, and a separate box for collage materials.
- Let your child know where art materials can be used – at the kitchen table, at a small child-sized table, on the kitchen floor, or outside. Some of the most enjoyable art materials are a bit messy and you want to be sure that the space you choose is one that can be cleaned easily.
- Encourage your child to take out the art materials and use them independently at any time.
- Find places to display your child’s art – on the refrigerator, on a wall in the child’s room, or in a hallway. Displaying children’s art lets them know you think it’s important and attractive.

Children’s natural love for art is something we can support together!